

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4725

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T BRUSSELS 07482

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NPOL, NATO, NL, BE

SUBJECT: PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES

REF: STATE 198550

1. WE EXPRESSED U.S. CONCERN AND REGRET OVER DUTCH PROPOSAL FURTHER TO REDUCE ITS ARMED FORCES COMMITTED TO NATO TO FOREIGN MINISTRY CHIEF OF NATO AFFAIRS, AMBASSADOR VAN DE KERCKHOVE ON AUGUST 22. IN DOING SO WE LEFT AIDE MEMOIRE, BASED ON REFTEL AND OTHER TELEGRAMS THIS SUBJECT, WHICH SUGGESTED THAT BELGIAN GOVERNMENT ALSO APPROACH GON TO REGISTER CONCERN.

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2. VAN DE KERCKHOVE TOLD US THAT BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

ENTIRLEY SHARED USG VIEWS OVER THIS MATTER. BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED THAT, UNLESS DUTCH PROPOSAL IS DROPPED, DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES IN BELGIUM MIGHT BRING BELGIAN DEFENSE BUDGET AND FORCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATO INTO QUESTION. ANY CHANGE IN BELGIAN CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD BE AGAINST FIRM GOVERNMENT POLICY TO MAINTAIN SUPPORT OF NATO.

3. BELGIANS HAVE NOT YET DECIDED WHAT APPROACH TO TAKE WITH THE DUTCH. FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL DISCUSS ISSUE WITH DEFENSE MINISTRY AT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON AUGUST 27. FOREIGN MINISTRY ALSO CONSIDERING CONVOKING DUTCH AMBASSADOR TO MAKE DEMARCHE SIMILAR TO OURS. WE ASKED AND WERE PROMISED THAT WE WOULD BE KEPT INFORMED OF BELGIAN ACTIVITIES IN THIS REGARD. RENNER

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NNN

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